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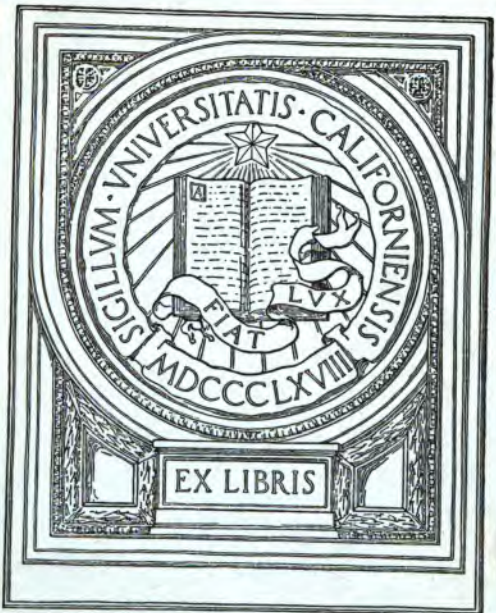

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Miss B Thayer
with the Regards of the
Author

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TWILIGHT HOURS.

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TWILIGHT HOURS:

OR

LEISURE MOMENTS OF AN ARTIST.

BY E. A. BRACKETT.

"What, art thou critical?" quoth he,
Eschew that heart's disease
That seeketh for displeasure, where
The intent hath been to please!"

Southey.

BOSTON:
PRINTED BY FREEMAN AND BOLLES.

1845.

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Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1845, by E. A. Brackett, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Massachusetts.

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PREFACE.

At the request of a few friends, I consented to the printing of this little volume for private circulation. As it may fall into less friendly hands, a few words of explanation may not be inappropriate. The principal part of the book was written, during the last year, in those intervals from study and labor which fall to the lot of every artist, and with no expectation that

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it would be read beyond my own fire-side. The enthusiasm which every artist brings to his profession, not unfrequently finds vent in other things. These outbreakings may be termed his waste thoughts, and he should be thankful that they take no worse direction than that of writing verse, though ever so humble its character. "The Old Man" is a part of an unfinished Poem which may hereafter be completed.

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CONTENTS.

	Page
Evening	11
The Old Man	17
The Beggar Boy	31
The Lone Wood	39
The Wind	41
The Face that Looketh up from the Stream	43
To One in Heaven	45
Lines Suggested on Finishing a Bust of Allston	48
The Brook	51
The Return	52
To Amanda	55
The Traveller and Maiden	56
The Pee-Wee	60
The Kennebec	62

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Page

Annabelle 65
The Water Lily 67
Sleep and Death 69
The Wreck of the Slave Ship 71
Lay thy Palm upon my Brow 75
The Poet 77
A Walk by the River Side 79
Autumn 85
The Blacksmith 88
The Dream 90
Morning 92

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EVENING.

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

EVENING.

The twilight Hours, fair winged hours,
Now with the fading light
All silently do usher in
Their elder sister, Night,
The shrouded queen, through whose deep veil
The smiling stars gleam bright.

How soft their misty forms glide up
The spacious vault of blue;
They clothe the hills and vales and plains
In robes of dusky hue,
While from their marble urns descends
On earth the glistening dew.

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A changing flood of crimson light
Moves slowly down the west,
Before the stately march of her
Who bears upon her breast
A shield inlaid with stars, and on
Her head a silver crest.

A drowsy hum steals on the air
From ocean's ceaseless flow,
As when the mountain peasant hears
In murmurs strong, yet low,
The voice of some great multitude
Far in the vale below.

The robin's dirge to parting light
Hath ceased upon the hill;
The laughing brook, that all the day
Rolled down with hearty will,
Beneath the dusky wings of night
No longer turns the mill.

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At such an hour as this men flee
From care and bitter strife,
To seek, beside the social hearth,
With love and beauty rife,
That calm which true affection throws
Around the toils of life.

For love likes not the glare of day;
But as a gentle flower
That fainting droops its head beneath
The heat of noon-day hour,
It sweetly glows when evening mild
Comes with its soothing power.

The poor and honest man, whose form
Beneath oppression bends,
Feels life leap through his care-worn limbs,
Such strength to him love lends;
He half forgets his daily task,
As home he lightly wends.

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E'en I, whose path lies far away
From man's accustomed wrong,
Who seldom mingle with the mass,
The fevered thoughtless throng,
That hurrying sweep unceasingly
The pent-up streets along,

Now greet with joy, O gentle Night,
Thy calm and full control;
For through the firmament of thought,
That strange, yet perfect whole,
Like stars at night, the rays of truth
Look in upon the soul.

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THE OLD MAN.

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THE OLD MAN.

'T was autumn, and a mellow light
In beauty clothed the scene,
A lengthened train of shadows lay
Upon the swarthy green,
Where fell the rays of setting sun
Like golden bars between,

When Walter Gray a thoughtless man,
Who dwelt in forest wild,
Returning down the woodland glade,
Spoke harshly to his child.
"Now wherefore shouldst thou angrily
Thus chide thy little one?
Methinks 't were more a parent's part
To speak in gentler tone.

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"Nay, smooth thy brow, I 'm weak and old,
But let me take thy boy,
His sunny face and laughing eye
Dilate my breast with joy."
So part in anger, part in shame,
Corrected Walter stood.
"Now who art thou, with long gray beard,
That seek'st this lonely wood?"

"Would'st listen to an old man's talk?
Then sit thee by my side."
And, swayed by light or deeper tones,
The old man thus replied: —
"Due westward, where the setting sun
Gleams on the mountain's brow,
Full twenty years I saw it, sir,
As we do see it now.

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"And where yon tall and leafless pine
Towers upward from the vale,
Its limbs and bark by lightning shorn,
Now standing ghostly pale,
An humble dwelling once I reared
Upon the land I tilled:
It was not framed for foolish show
Such as in pride ye build;

"But massive logs together piled
With clay and straw between,
And o'er the low-thatched roof there crept
Woodbine and evergreen.
There bloomed the wind-flower and the rose
Beside the buttercup,
The velvet pink that gently folds
At eve its petals up.

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"The sweetbriar and the violet
In silent beauty grew,
And in the morning's rosy light
I saw them smiling through,
With looks as lovely as a child's,
The pearly drops of dew.

"A tiny brook, a laughing rill,
Danced ever by the door,
And kissed the moss and little vines
That wrapt the cold stones o'er.
The trees, the flowers, the running brook,
The gentle song of birds,
To me a heavenly music spoke,
'More eloquent than words.'

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"The flowers, like childhood's happy thoughts,
Pass quietly away:
They bloom in spring, in Autumn winds
They wither and decay.
But then a fairer, nobler flower
To my young heart was given: —
I do believe, as Christ doth live,
'T is blooming now in heaven.

"That lovely lady of the vale
Had eyes like thine, my child,
Through which the soul in beauty breathed
A language ever mild.
And she a blessed mother was; —
With reverence be it said,
Earth never held a fairer form,
Than that dear mother dead.

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"Alas! that we should feel such blight,
That all our joys are brief!
Nay, nay, be seated still, my friend,
I soon shall find relief.
I cannot choose but let them flow,
These tokens of my grief.

"Albeit there are those whose hearts
By sorrow have been steeled;
For grief full oft benumbs the mind
Till every spring is sealed;—
With them the rays of love and truth
No kindly influence yield.

"But I must weep, as back I turn
To years that long have passed,
Years that have seen my brighest hopes
To dark oblivion cast,
Swept, as the trembling leaves are swept
By chill November's blast.

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"And all must weep whose hearts are framed
To nature's plaintive tones;
Its voice is in the passing breeze,
The leafless forest moans,
And yonder bird with music sweet
A sadder feeling owns.

"But these are melancholy strains,
Soft as the breathing lute
Attuned by nature's boundless love,
The lonely heart to suit:
To thoughtless mirth and foolish pride
The heavens are always mute.

"It is a mournful thing to those
Who love kind nature's face,
And in her varied features learn
A heavenly power to trace,
To see how man of thoughtless mind
Her beauty doth deface.

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"Ah, why is he a thing accursed?
Why shrinks he from the light
That from the inner man should flow
And guide his steps aright?
Why turns he down the rugged path
That leads to darkest night?

"Pride, selfish pride his eye hath dimmed
And led his soul astray:
He scarcely hears the still small voice
That bids him ever pray,
Nor sees the deep o'erwhelming gulf
That skirts his thorny way.

"If man to man were always kind,
These tears would never flow,
Nor had I cause to feel the grief
That rends my bosom so,
Which, through a long and cheerless life
Hath bowed my spirit low.

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"Look on the golden harvest-fields
Now bathed in smoky light;
And hark! the sound of yonder stream
That greets the coming night;
With silvery voice, a low sweet tune
It singeth with delight.

"O nature, with thy ceaseless voice,
Thy kind maternal face,
How dost thou ever strive to woo
Man from his wild embrace
Of wrong, of hate, and reckless strife,
To God's exceeding grace!

"There 's beauty in the changing scene,
When Autumn's hand hath spread
Her mantle, o'er the forest trees,
Of yellow, brown, and red;
Wild music in the dance of leaves,
By viewless fairies led;

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" A fragrance in the fading flower
That meekly droops its head;
Reward in heaven for those who watch
Around the sick one's bed;
A holy calm for those who love
The memory of the dead.

" Here sleeps, within the silent grave,
That form so dear to me;
The forest trees above her wave,
Murmuring pleasantly.
A tinkling brook, with mournful sound,
Is ever hymning there,
And gentle flowers hang o'er the mound,
Like saints that bend in prayer.

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"Yet doth her spirit sometimes deign
My weary path to cheer,
To soothe the heart's unceasing pain
And dry the silent tear.
A presence still of her, I know,
Doth guide my thoughts aright,
And lead me on towards the flow
Of heaven's unchanging light.

"But see! the sun goes down the west,
The sky is flaked with red,
And o'er the grass and fading flowers
The glistening dew is spread.
How calmly steals the twilight round
The mansions of the dead!"

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Thus talked awhile that aged man;
His eye, though dimmed with tears,
Spoke of the earnest, trustful hope
Of one who ever hears
The music of eternal peace
Borne on the tide of coming years.

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THE BEGGAR BOY.

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THE BEGGAR BOY.

"Oh ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!"

BURNS.

I.

I saw a ragged beggar boy,
A fair and gentle child,
Approach a rich and haughty man,
And say, in accents mild,

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"I have no home to shelter me,
My parents both are dead;
O wilt thou not in charity
Give me a little bread?"

A scowl was on the rich man's brow,
As on the child he gazed,
And, turning scornfully away,
In pride his Maker praised,

That he was not that famished wight,
All helpless and forlorn,
Cast on this rude unfeeling world,
To luckless misery born.

The child in bitter anguish wept,
His heart was torn with grief;
While in the bleak and searching wind
He trembled like a leaf.

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Night's heavy shades came thick and fast,
The wintry winds shrieked wild,
As in their viewless arms they bore
A white robe for the child.

II.

The joyous sound of song and dance,
Of barbiton and lyre,
With thoughtless mirth and revelry
In rich and gay attire,

Had met within a banquet hall,
Upon that gloomy night,
Where sparkling wine and costly gems
Flashed in a flood of light.

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And beauty with her witching eye,
Oft stole a thrilling glance
From those whose hearts beat light and free,
Amid the whirling dance.

There tinted rays, from chandeliers,
Lit locks of golden hair,
And music, mirth, and revelry,
Swelled on the midnight air.

Cold avarice, with selfish aim,
To pampered wealth allied,
Had gathered, in that festival,
The nation's shame and pride.

Still faster whirled the giddy dance,
Each heart o'erflowed with joy;
Still louder shrieked the ruthless blast
Above the beggar boy.

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III.

The sound of dance and revelry
No longer woke the night;
For stealing slowly up the sky
Soft came the morning light.

A bridal robe of spotless white,
Upon the cold earth lay,
And dome, and spire, and capital,
Gleamed in the sunlit ray.

A thousand gems of crystal hue
From drooping branches hung,
And in the clear and frosty air
Like fairy castles swung.

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A laborer with the morn's first beam,
Sought his accustomed toil,
To mingle in the hardened strife,
The city's rough turmoil.

With pallid cheek and haggard brow,
He went upon his way,
And passing by a mouldering wall,
Where ruined columns lay,

He found beneath a frosty heap
The stormy blasts had piled,
Cold as the stones that round him lay,
That poor and friendless child!

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IV.

'T was noon in heaven; — the angel choirs,
By ever-gushing springs,
Amid the amaranthine groves
Had spread their snowy wings,

And soaring mid-way in the air,
Hung o'er the living stream
That from the golden city flows,
Like morning's starry beam.

Winding amid the silent worlds,
Far through the upper sky,
Along the path-way of the sun,
Bright visions met the eye.

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On through the eternal sea of light,
Mid swelling strains of joy,
An angel host, on golden wings
Bore home the Beggar Boy.

Joy! joy! to thee, thou helpless one!
Thy home was not of earth,
No more thy little feet in vain
Shall seek the rich man's hearth;

Nor shalt thou, in the wintry storm,
For food and raiment pine;—
In radiant robes of beauty clothed,
The bread of life is thine.

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THE LONE WOOD.

I KNOW a path, a silent path,
O'erhung with forest wild;
So deep, so dark, the sun's fair light
Hath never on it smiled.

It winds around a little lake,
Where waving cedars grow;
And dark old pines in stately pride
Their branches upward throw.

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No flowerets deck its lonely side,
Or scent the cooling breeze;
No cheerful song of happy birds
Is heard among the trees.

The rippling waves along the shore
Send forth a mournful sound
Blent with the noise of rustling leaves
That dance upon the ground.

It is a lone and quiet place,
Most fit for musing mood;
And he that loves not pensive thought,
Likes not that dark old wood.

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THE WIND.

THROUGH the trees with hollow voice,
Roars the wild and ruthless wind,
Whirling up the crisped leaves
On the ground all thickly lined.

At the window now it calleth
With a harsh yet mournful cry,
Like the wail of evil spirits
As they sweep the ebon sky.

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Cruel wind, that thus complaineth
Of thy hard and wayward lot,
Thinkest thou yon houseless beggar
All thy rudeness hath forgot?

With thy cold and piercing breath
Thou didst numb his pallid form,
In his wan and mournful face
Drov'st the rough unfriendly storm!

Cruel wind, that ever wailest
To the night thy misery telling,
Seek thy dark and lonely caves,
Come not round our humble dwelling.

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THE FACE THAT LOOKETH UP FROM THE STREAM.

Thou happy child, so full of life,
Wilt thou not dally here awhile?
Bend o'er this stream, and thou shalt see
A sunny face look up and smile.

O! father! 'tis a pleasant face
That kindly looketh up to me;—
It seemeth like my mother's form,
Yet here I know she cannot be.

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'T is true, my child, she is not here;
But look again, and thou shalt trace
Upon the brow this rosy wreath,
And see! my hand is on the face.

And yet so like thy mother dear,
I see thy youthful features beam,
I almost think it is her face,
Thus painted on the running stream.

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TO ONE IN HEAVEN.

I HAVE not seen the silent place,
Where thy dear form was laid;
I followed not the mournful train,
That bore thee in death's shade,
Where thoughtless hands had scooped a grave,
Beside Ohio's murmuring wave.

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Ah me! what bitter grief was mine! —
If grief it may be called,
When deep unutterable woe
The shrinking soul hath palled,
And dark despair hath like a tomb
Sealed up the heart in speechless gloom.

But oh! if in that world of light,
To thee the power is given
To feel, to read our earthly thoughts
From records kept in heaven,
Thou knowest with what heartfelt prayer,
I've thanked thee for thy tender care

To thy poor child, whose wayward steps
Thy boundless love hath staid
From those wild paths which lead astray,
That he might seek for aid
To free his soul from passion's strife,
And meekly bear the ills of life.

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Not all in vain my tears were shed
O'er thy untimely fate;
For I have learned with patient thought
My own sad hour to wait,
And firmly trust, as Christ doth live,
That he to my weak soul will give
A changeless home in realms above,
Where I shall know again thy love.

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LINES SUGGESTED ON FINISHING

A BUST OF ALLSTON.

Upwards unto the living light
Intensely thou dost gaze,
As if thy very soul would seek,
In that far distant maze,

Communion with those heavenly forms,
That, lifting to the sight
Their golden wings and snowy robes,
Float on a sea of light.

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Anon, far, far away they glide,
  Shooting through realms of bliss,
Till from the spirit's eye they fade
  In Heaven's own bright abyss.

Such are the visions thou dost wake,
  Such are the thoughts that rise
In him who, 'neath thy upturned brow,
  Beholds thy searching eyes.

There is no stain upon that brow,
  Where once the glow of life
With more than earthly beauty shone, —
  Within, no wasting strife.

How strangely have the swift hours flown,
  As o'er the shapeless pile
I poured the strength of my full soul,
  Lost to all else the while.

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When fell the last faint stroke which told,
That thou and I must part,
That all of life that I could give
Was thine, how throbbed my heart!

Yet to this head that I have formed,
Should aught of praise belong,
Not unto me the merit due,
But Him who made me strong.

Who, ever lent His fostering care,
My wayward steps to guide
Through paths of flowers in beauty clothed,
Along life's sunny tide.

Thou who wast kind, and good, and great,
Thy task on earth is done;
Of those that walked in beauty's light,
Thou wast the chosen one.

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THE BROOK.

O, SWEET to me yon brooklet's play;
Its merry voice is heard
Through all the day,
So light and gay,
Singing the sweetest roundelay,
That e'er a maiden's bosom stirred.

And wild it leaps adown the hill
Among the rocks to stray;
Around the mill
With voice so shrill,
The wild, the merry, laughing rill,
Bounds o'er the rocks and far away.

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THE RETURN.

The setting sun had closed the day,
The warm light still was glowing,
As winding on my lonely way
By streamlet's gentle flowing,

I met a maiden fair to see,
Beside the rippling water;
So beautiful she seemed to me,
I fain with her would loiter.

She knelt in robes all snowy white,
Her face was turned to heaven;
And there, amid the rosy light,
This prayer was meekly given:

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"O Father, guide my steps aright;
And with thine eye all seeing,
O, watch thou through the cheerless night,
A poor and helpless being!"

She turned her to a little mound,
The vines were o'er it creeping,
For there in death's cold chains were bound
The loved ones 'neath it sleeping.

"I strew these flowers upon this grave
Where silent sleeps my mother;
And this I cast upon the wave,
To him, my long lost brother."

Her silver voice it died away,
Her eyes with tears were streaming,
Reflecting back the starlit ray
That from the sky was beaming.

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I bowed me to the lady fair,
The while her bosom trembled
Beneath a flood of sunny hair,
That golden light resembled.

"He sleeps not in the dark blue wave,
Though here may sleep my mother;
For He, whose hands alone could save,
Has sent thee back thy Brother!"

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TO AMANDA.

The happy smiles of thy sweet face
Have found a never-changing place
Within my heart,
Where evermore the seraph song
Of whispering thoughts, shall gather strong
And hold a part

In all my weary wanderings.
My soul from inward ponderings
Looks forth upon the cold, cold world,
And sees, as when in gloom of night,
One lonely star is shining bright,
No other form than thine.

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THE TRAVELLER AND MAIDEN.

MAIDEN.

TRAVELLER, with fatigue opprest,
In our dwelling there is rest;
Wilt partake our homely fare?
That we have we freely share.

TRAVELLER.

Thanks to thee, thou gentle maiden,
Lend thy hand, for I am laden;
Help to move this heavy pack,
Firmly bound upon my back.

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MAIDEN.

To what distant land dost thou,
Weak and old, with care-worn brow,
Wend thy way, thou hoary sage
In the twilight of thy age?

* * * * *

TRAVELLER.

Maiden, by the forest yonder,
Where the mountain parts asunder,
There a silver streamlet glides,
Down the mossy vale it slides.

MAIDEN.

Yes, and by its side the flowers,
Like the mem'ry of bright hours,
To the heart refreshment lend
As worn travellers o'er them bend.

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TRAVELLER.

Bloom they still upon the shore
Brightly as in days of yore,
When the pilgrim's faithful band
Worshipped in this happy land?

MAIDEN.

Father told, that when a boy,
Then they filled his heart with joy;
Now they smile above his head,
Where he sleepeth with the dead.

TRAVELLER.

Stands the cottage now as then
Far within the rocky glen,
Where the foamy waters leap
Down the dark and craggy steep?

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MAIDEN.

Moss-grown stands the cottage now
There beneath the mountain's brow,
Not as when I was a child; —
'T is a ruin lone and wild.

TRAVELLER.

Heaven bless thee, I must go, —
May'st thou never live to know
Half the changes here I find,
As I call past scenes to mind.

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THE PEE-WEE.

With sound of woe, all chill and cold,
The drifting snow along is rolled,
The threatening storm is gathering fast;
I hear, sweet bird, amid the blast,
Thy little song, "pee-wee, pee-wee,"
Come dwell with me, come dwell with me.

In forest lone, through winter's storm,
Where bleak winds moan, thy tiny form
Is ever seen; from rock and glen
Sweet echo sendeth back again
Thy simple strain, "pee-wee pee-wee,"
Come dwell with me, come dwell with me.

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And thou, fair maid, with rosy cheek
And lids that shade thy eyes so meek,
When sadder thoughts by gloom are stirred,
Forget not thou yon little bird:
Above the storm his voice is free,
Come dwell with me, come dwell with me.

In passion's strife, when joy hath fled,
And o'er thy life no ray is shed,
When dark despair is gathering strong,
Then list! thou 'lt hear a gentle song,
A still small voice will call to thee,
Come dwell with me, come dwell with me.

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THE KENNEBEC.

Thou art lovely, noble river,
Flowing to thy dark blue home;
Borne upon thee, flowerets floating
Mingle with the sparkling foam.

I have watched at morn thy ripples
Dancing in the sunny beam,
And beneath tall trees at twilight
Laid me on thy banks to dream.

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As in thoughtful mood I gazed,
Thou wast ever unto me
As the current of my thoughts
Heaving, struggling to be free.

With the shadows of the past
Comes a train of silver light
Telling of those happy days,
When my heart was free from blight;

When the rushing pulses beat
To the joyous dance of youth,
When the face unconsciously
Mirrored back the rays of truth.

By thy side I oft have greeted
Friends that I may meet no more;
She, the loved, whose heart was plighted,
Sleepeth by thy pebbly shore.

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There the wild rose sweetly growing
Sheds its leaves o'er hallowed graves;
There forever gently breathing,
Chimes the music of thy waves.

Thou art like, O gentle river,
To life's deep unfathomed tide,
And the flowers are lovely visions,
That adown its surface glide.

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ANNABELLE.

Sweet Annabelle, dear Annabelle,
When thou wast weak and pale,
And leaning on my arm, we went
Adown the lonely vale,
I well remember thou didst tell
That I should lose thee, Annabelle.

A long and weary time has past,
The spring has come again,
The laurel blooms upon the hill,
The daisy on the plain, —
I wander lonely through the dell; —
But where art thou, sweet Annabelle?

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The little birds call to their mates
From every shady nook,
And, rushing down the woodland side,
I hear the gurgling brook;
To me it seems to ring thy knell, —
For thou art dead, dear Annabelle.

Sweet Annabelle, dear Annabelle,
When thou wast weak and pale,
And leaning on my arm, we went
Adown the lonely vale;
I well remember thou didst tell
That I should lose thee, Annabelle.

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THE WATER LILY.

How bright, upon the rippling tide,
The snow-white lilies bloom!
As, swaying there in stately pride,
They smile above the gloom!

See, like the joyous things of life,
Their upturned faces glow,
Regardless of the water's strife,
Its dark and sullen flow.

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As pure as snow-flakes from the skies,
The buds, expanding wide,
Upon the surface gently rise
And sway above the tide.

Lo! nature lifts her fairest flower
From out the dark steel wave,
The rainbow shines amid the shower,
The rose blooms o'er the grave.

Thus sweetly in the morn of life
Hope's fairest flowerets bloom,
Unmindful of the bitter strife,
That shrouds the heart in gloom.

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SLEEP AND DEATH.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF A GROUP OF SCULPTURE.

Like an infant laid to rest,
Rosy Sleep with dewy eye
Unto Death his warm cheek pressed;—
"Thou shalt ever by me lie."

Sleep doth nestle by his side,
Even as the wooing dove;
Death is cold and filmy-eyed,
And the world doth hate his love.

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Coming from the silent land,
Over life they have control,
Ever wandering hand in hand,
Speaking only to the soul.

Death and Sleep twin brothers are ;
Death is folded to the breast ;
Gentle Sleep he soothes life's care,
Death doth give eternal rest.

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THE WRECK OF THE SLAVE SHIP.

THERE 's a huge black cloud, like a midnight
shroud,
Stretched out on the ocean's verge,
Where the sea and sky to mortal eye
In one vast concave merge;
The wind doth blow, yet with motion slow
A ship rolls on with the surge.

From the gunwale trail her masts and sail,
No helm her course to check;
Around her beams the white foam gleams,
The waves leap o'er her deck;
Through the heaving sea, all fearfully
She comes a shattered wreck.

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On, on she steers, nor tacks nor veers;
The sailors weep and pray;
The angry main heeds not their pain,
But sweeps them down the bay;
With heavy crash on rocks they dash,
The timbers float away.

Clenched in the sand his bony hand,
One strives with might and main,
Lest the heaving swell that o'er him fell
Should bear him back again!
For with deafening roar against the shore,
Breaks up the foamy train;
Like an Arab steed, when, at full speed,
The rider checks the rein.

No power can save; the maddening wave
Hath swept him out to sea;
At times his form, amid the storm,
Looks up imploringly;
Then sinks away from light of day,
Down, down eternally!

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High up the sky, with mournful cry,
The sea-bird wends her course;
Nor cares to gaze on eyes deep glazed
By death's unyielding force;
For everywhere, with floating hair,
The sea heaves up a corse.

From the water's edge a long black ledge
Shoots out athwart the bay;
In its craggy sides the fierce shark hides,
To seize upon his prey;
Through the foam-built wreath he 'll gnash his teeth,
Nor want for food to-day.

Why o'er that crew, thou shrill curlew,
Is heard thy little song?
Thou bearest not man's wayward lot,
His passions wild and strong;
For he of might assumes the right,
His brother man to wrong.

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The storm-lit sea, that angrily
  Now swallows up the dead,
Is yet more kind than they who bind
  On man a yoke of lead,
Till, like a serf, he licks the turf,
  Where ruthless tyrants tread.

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LAY THY PALM UPON MY BROW.

Come lay thy palm upon my brow,
Sit closer by my side;
Thou hast been very kind to me,
I would those tears were dried.

Oh Mary, Mary, cease to weep,
I would it were not so;
Two happy months have scarcely flown,
And it is hard to know,

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While in the very morn of life,
That we in grief must part, —
For I have felt the hand of death
Press heavy on my heart.

Then lay thy palm upon my brow,
Sit closer by my side;
Thou hast been very kind to me,
I would those tears were dried.

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THE POET.

The poet sighs, the poet sings, —
Ah wherefore should he sigh,
Who breathes such notes of melody,
Whose thoughts may never die.

Go ask the flower, whose rich perfume
Upon the air is borne;
Is not its breath more fragrant, when
By rude hands it is torn?

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Ask why above yon silvery lake
A strain of music floats; —
It is the snow-white swan, whose life
Is parting with its notes.

Go ask the sweet Æolian harp,
Why its soft music flows;
It only sings, when o'er the chords
The chill wind harshly blows.

Then ask not why the poet sighs,
Or why he sweetly sings;
For like the harp his heart is strung,
And sadness moves the strings.

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A WALK BY THE RIVER SIDE.

My friend and I walked arm in arm
Along the river's side;
He was a man of thoughtful mind,
And scarce to me replied,

As I, with lightsome heart, rehearsed
A tale of by-gone times,
Which some poor bard in frantic mood
Had woven into rhymes.

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A simple story of a youth
Who climbed a mountain's crest,
To rob an eagle, that had built
Upon its top her nest,

Who daily sought among his flocks
To seize upon her prey,
And ever, as his back was turned,
Would bear the lambs away

To feed her young, until the ledge
With chalky bones was white,
And, like a spectre mountain, loomed
Up through the pale moon light.

I scarce had reached the closing verse,
Which told with wondrous skill,
How manfully he battled long
That war-like bird to kill,

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When Arthur turned to me and said,
While pointing up the sky:
See far away yon bird, that seems
No larger than a fly.

How fast he nears, and now we see
His broad wings waving wide,
And now he hangs all motionless
Above the rolling tide.

Anon he folds his massive wings;
Then, with a sudden sweep,
Swift as a falling star, he shot
Far down the swelling deep.

So heavily he seemed to plunge
Beneath the dark blue wave,
I well nigh thought the crazy bird
Had found a watery grave;

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But soon he rose with motion slow
From out the glistening spray,
And in his talons firmly grasped,
He held his finny prey.

A short way up the stream there grew
A dark old forest wood,
Where on a dry and blasted limb
A white-head eagle stood,

And eyed the fish-hawk, as he rose
High up the pathless sky;
Then, leaping from the trembling limb,
With wild discordant cry

Pursued the hawk that frightened fled,
Till forced to yield his prey,
Which that fierce eagle seized upon,
And proudly bore away.

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Then Arthur turned again and said:
"How like yon tireless bird,
The artist soars through realms of light,
By heavenly beauty stirred,

"Till prompted by unyielding want,
He plunges into strife,
And veils his God-like nature 'neath
The turbid stream of life.

"And ever as he rises up
With heavy earth-stained wings,
There follows him an ugly fiend
That, like the eagle, springs

"To rob him of the paltry mite
Which he has fought to gain,
And he must needs with patient thought
Live on, nor e'er complain.

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"'T is naught that his warm heart should heave
With agonizing woe,
While thousand thoughtless souls glide on,
Nor wish or care to know,

"How sad a thing it is to feel
The heavy moveless chain,
That fetters the immortal mind,
And renders life all vain."

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AUTUMN.

Come thou amid the starlight dim,
Where blows the fresh south wind,
And, falling from the forest trees,
The leaves the ground have lined;

And we will tread yon rugged path
Along the upland lea,
And listen to the plaintive voice,
That cometh from the sea.

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The sea it answereth to the wail
Of winds upon the hill,
Where, leaping o'er its pebbly bed,
Is heard the gurgling rill.

The leaves lie pale upon the ground,
They tremble in the breeze;
For cold the hand, that has been laid
Upon the mighty trees.

A voice of sadness fills the air,
All nature seems to weep, —
The pine-trees bow their stately heads,
As o'er the strong winds sweep.

The flowers lie faded 'neath our feet;
For Autumn hath been here,
And, with his cold and withering breath,
Hath left them pale and sere.

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The dying flowers! their breath we breathe,
Their spirits glide on high,
Careering through the eternal blue
Along the starlit sky.

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THE BLACKSMITH.

The Smith stands by, with small blue eye
That shines beneath a forehead high,—
His sinewy form is strongly made,
And speaks him master of his trade.

He moves the break, the live coals shake,
He turns them o'er with iron rake,
And from the hot and glowing pile
He draws the spike and checkered file.

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With heavy sounds the sledge rebounds,
A massive weight of many pounds ;
His brawny arm with ease doth ply,
While round about the sparkles fly.

The sickle made, a curving blade
With sharp and jagged teeth inlaid,
To serve the hardy sun-burnt hand
That reaps the harvest of the land.

Thus day and night a lurid light
From forge and anvil glistens bright,
On bony arm and swarthy brow
Of him who moulds the scythe and plough.

For man doth fret, and toil, and sweat,
Till care with iron hand hath set
Upon his brow her wrinkled seal,
And moulds him as he moulds the steel.

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THE DREAM.

Come gently lay thy cheek to mine,
Thy hand upon my brow;
For I am lonely and would have
Thee, sister, with me now.

This seat is thine; now sit thee down.
Didst see me when I slept?
I had a dream, sweet dream, so soft
The vision o'er me crept.

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I deemed that I was still awake,
Still heard thy evening song
Poured forth in strains of tenderness;
And my weak heart grew strong.

While round thy notes of music stole,
Unearthly beauty filled my soul;
And ever present to my sight,
Seemed floating on a sea of light
An Angel form.

Dear Jane, in thee I fondly trace
The image of thy mother's face,
And sure I am thy mother dear
In spirit form was hovering near,
And called to me.

With motion graceful as a child,
She beckoned me with look so mild,
I could not choose but look that way,
And oft in whispers heard her say;
O come with me.

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MORNING.

The sombre queen lifts up her veil.
The stars that shone so bright
Through all the silent hours of rest,
From that far distant height,
How have they striven to woo my soul
To worlds of living light!

Now waning slow, with tearful eyes
I see them fade away,
Till one by one the silvery mist
Has veiled each heavenly ray;
While in the east a deep dull red
Proclaims the coming day.

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The gushing sound of laughing rills, —
The lowing of the herds,
As down the grassy lane they go, —
The gentle song of birds
That call from leafy groves with notes
More musical than words, —

Are borne upon the fresh south wind,
That fans my pallid cheek
And calms my fevered brow, as one
Who, with affection meek,
Bends o'er my couch with tender eyes
That all too plainly speak

To my faint heart, and bid me learn
To love all simple things.
Yet am I sad. The rosy morn
Nought but affliction brings;
For haggard want, with fiendish look,
Forever round me clings.

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O call it not a weakness, if, —
In this hard world, which teems
With countless host of selfish souls,
Who live in fevered dreams
Of worthless dross, — whose only joy
From hoarded lucre gleams,

And *that* wrung from the honest toil
Of those they proudly spurn
As things accursed by God and man, —
I mournfully return
To my own roof, and from the night
A kinder lesson learn.

That which I should be, I am not;
The stream is turned aside.
Think not the visions of my youth
O'er which I dwelt with pride,
Have, like a fair but tender plant,
For want of culture died;

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But rather, like the flower which springs
Where strong winds ceaseless blow,
Whirling the leaves with wailing sound
As round and round they go,
Till bruised and torn, at last they hurl
It down the vale below.

Be calm, ye troubled thoughts, that through
My dizzy brain are whirled!
For up the sky, in golden light,
The robes of day unfurled,
Speak of a dawn beyond the grave, —
Light in the spirit world.

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